



# Options for Community Engagement and Dialogue

Co-creation of programs, policies, and strategies through community-police engagement opportunities can authentically and organically build understanding, trust, confidence, respect, and diversity of thought. Agencies are encouraged to:

- Establish equitable opportunities by removing barriers to participation, embracing diversity, and engaging in ongoing two-way communication.
- Engage in productive dialogue by prioritizing transparency.
- Facilitate collective solutions by pursuing collaboration and partnerships.
- Act on community feedback by encouraging mutual participation and shared perspectives.

A spectrum of informal and formal community-police engagement options is illustrated below:

Engagement Opportunities - Information Sharing	
<b>Social media/ media releases</b>	Traffic updates, requests for assistance identifying suspects, announcement of community events, sharing positive stories
<b>Community surveys</b>	General satisfaction with the agency, specific topics
<b>Press conferences</b>	Updates on identified ongoing investigations, new initiatives -include time for both media and community questions

## Considerations:

Agencies can initiate community engagement in a variety of ways. Releasing clear and frequent messages on social media platforms and other media outlets is a simple way for agencies to keep communities informed and receive feedback. Surveys can also be a cost-effective way to receive community input on identified topics. Surveys can be posted on social media platforms, and paper copies can be mailed or disseminated in high-traffic buildings throughout the community (e.g., government buildings, community centers, shopping locations). Proactively addressing the media and intentionally setting aside time to take questions from community members can also demonstrate transparency and create space for dialogue around matters of public interest.



# Options for Community Engagement and Dialogue

## Engagement Opportunities – In-Person Interactions

<b>Community events</b>	Events hosted by agency (e.g., safety awareness events) or other groups (e.g., community fairs)
<b>Unstructured engagement</b>	Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out
<b>Ride outs</b>	Patrol, specialty units (e.g., K-9 unit, traffic enforcement)
<b>Front-porch line ups</b>	Held at community members' residences, places of worship, or parks
<b>Neighborhood briefings</b>	Held at neighborhood location following a specific event or to address specific topics of interest to the residents
<b>Town Hall meetings</b>	Regularly scheduled, event/topic-specific
<b>Strategic partnerships</b>	Faith leaders, substance abuse treatment agencies, schools, community-based victim services agencies

### Considerations:

Agencies are encouraged to incorporate in-person engagement opportunities with community members. Unstructured time in which members of the agency make themselves available to talk to community members about topics of concern can help agencies stay informed. Ride-outs and front porch line-ups can be an effective way for community members to gain a better understanding of police operations and provide opportunities for questions and candid conversations. Agencies can further keep community members informed and solicit feedback by holding briefings in identified neighborhoods following specific events or to directly address identified topics with those impacted. More formal settings such as Town Hall meetings can encourage dialogue around specific issues and can help identify action steps for both police agencies and community partners. Developing strategic partnerships with community groups and agencies can assist in carrying messages from the agency and establishing holistic, inclusive responses to community needs. Agencies are also encouraged to include all agency personnel in engagement efforts as appropriate, not just those in formal leadership positions or those assigned to community policing/community outreach units.



# Options for Community Engagement and Dialogue

## Engagement Opportunities – Structured Agency Programs

<b>Citizen police academies</b>	Open to community members, targeted recruitment with identified groups, conducted in languages representative of the community
<b>Youth engagement activities</b>	Explorer programs, school-based programs
<b>Volunteer opportunities</b>	Community event participation, Citizens on Patrol, neighborhood watch program liaisons, victim services response, Volunteers in Police Service

### Considerations:

Structured learning opportunities can be an effective way to address public safety concerns and build bridges with community members. By inviting community members to learn more about the policing profession and agency policies and practices, accurate information can be conveyed, and community members' questions can be answered. Agencies can use these structured activities to gather feedback from community members, identify gaps in services, co-create problem-solving strategies, and enlist the help of community members in vital agency functions. Volunteers can be force multipliers and serve as community ambassadors for the agency. They can also serve as liaisons with other city departments such as Animal Control, code compliance, public works/transportation, and others that address important but non-critical issues on behalf of police agencies. These engagement opportunities often involve volunteer use of agency equipment, specialized training, and program oversight by agency personnel. Agencies are strongly encouraged to establish policies and procedures before implementing these programs. Agencies are also encouraged to include all agency personnel in engagement efforts as appropriate, not just those in formal leadership positions or those assigned to community policing/community outreach units.

## Engagement Opportunities – Shared Contributions to Personnel Development

<b>Training scenario participation</b>	During cadet academy and in-service training
<b>Co-facilitated training</b>	By agency personnel and community partners (e.g., domestic violence detectives co-facilitating with community-based domestic violence victim advocates)
<b>Hiring/Promotion scenario participation</b>	Engaging community members to act out scenarios in which candidates must respond appropriately to identified needs (e.g., concerned citizen, victim of a crime)

### Considerations:

Community members can be involved in a variety of agency functions. By inviting individuals representing the larger community to participate in training activities, they may feel they are directly contributing to the development of police personnel serving their communities. This can also provide opportunities for community members to observe police training, help identify gaps in training, and gain a better understanding of the topics and skills covered. Community partners can provide a multidisciplinary perspective on a variety of topics when they are invited to co-facilitate training events. Community members can be further included in identified agency decisions by inviting them to help develop and participate in scenario-based testing for hiring and promotions within the agency.



# Options for Community Engagement and Dialogue

## Engagement Opportunities – Co-Produced Solution Development

<b>Listening sessions/ roundtables/ focus groups</b>	Facilitated discussions around identified topics (e.g., police response to marginalized groups, use of force)
<b>Policy review committees</b>	Input on identified policies, implementing new technology, adopting new initiatives (e.g., pursuit policies, body-worn cameras, early warning systems, grant programs)
<b>Hiring/promotion board participation, selection input</b>	Input on interview questions, assessment criteria, panel composition, and selection decisions
<b>Community advisory groups</b>	Input on identified issues (e.g., training curriculum, community policing strategies, recruiting strategies)
<b>Citizen review boards</b>	Input on Internal Affairs discipline decisions, use of force incident reviews, complaint investigations and decisions

### Considerations:

Structured conversations facilitated by outside, objective professionals can be an effective way to gain valuable insight into complex topics impacting the community. By inviting participation, agencies can reinforce the important roles and voices of community members. This may translate into new ideas, creative solutions, and new partnering opportunities. Through inclusion of community members around policy review, agencies can benefit from increased objectivity, reduction in the perception of bias, and a comprehensive system of checks and balances. Community advisory groups should represent the larger community with targeted recruiting as appropriate. These groups can serve to provide tailored input and presentation of options for complex issues agencies are facing. Selection for participation can be determined based on the focus of each advisory group. Proactive development of citizen review boards can incorporate community input into agency policies, practices, and decisions impacting how policing is both carried out and experienced.

Explicitly conveying the intention for each chosen engagement opportunity will provide a framework for positive, solution-focused outcomes. Agencies are encouraged to maximize proactive engagement opportunities. When faced with oversight decisions made by others, agencies can embrace a position of leadership around complex conversations, responses, and co-produced resolutions.

### IACP Resources

IACP [Community-Police Engagement Page](#)

IACP Model Policy: [Social Media](#)

IACP Model Policy: [Media Relations](#)

IACP [Policy Framework for Improved Community-Police Engagement](#)

IACP [Law Enforcement Policy Resource Center](#)